

HOW DO WE READ THE BIBLE?



SYNOPSIS

We continue in our Word of God series tackling the question: How do we go about reading the Bible? First and foremost, we need to think of our approach and our attitude. Even if we have mastered all the tools for interpreting the Bible, if we have the wrong attitude and approach, it won't make a difference. So we must come to the Word of God in the right manner, as a student with humility, willing to allow God's word to convict and challenge us. We give it permission to speak into our lives and transform us.

Having said that, as we read the Bible, we need to treat it as both scripture and literature. We honor it as sacred and authoritative, but we also understand that we need to learn how to interpret the literary elements within the Bible.

We wrapped up hearing practical tips on how to read through the Bible.

1. Be Patient. Reading the Bible takes time and effort. Centering our lives around the Word of God takes time, and transformation is slow and cumbersome. Yet the more we read through the Bible, the more familiar we are with God's word.
2. Read intentionally and purposefully. We need to read regularly rather than compulsively, and often that requires us to make a plan so that it can become a habit.
3. Read through large chunks at a time. Certain parts of the Bible are meant to be read through in large chunks at a time, and even if you can't do it on a daily basis. Set time to read through large chunks of the Bible once in a while.
4. Meditate on the Word of God. The goal of knowing the Word of God is not just having the right answers, but to allow it to form us and shape us.



QUICK POINTS FOR READING THROUGH EACH GENRE

1 NARRATIVES

There are different intentions with stories. Some narratives give us context to the history of God's people. Other narratives have a specific point tied to the story. Just because it's in the story does not mean God approves of it. Biblical characters are complex. We should be careful not to import our own cultural lens into scripture.

2 PSALMS were collections of poems by Jewish writers. Some were to be prayed in the home, others were to be sung while gathered at the temple. In exile, psalms became a prayer book, designed as a virtual temple. Psalms can give language to our prayers.

4 EPISTLES

Epistles were the letters written to the church. Keep in mind that they were written to a specific audience with a specific purpose. They were not simple instructions and corrections, but rather to emphasize our identity and how we ought to behave in light of that identity.

3

WISDOM
LITERATURE

Proverbs are not to be taken as universal truth, but as general wisdom that applies to life. It's important to recognize that there is difference between biblical wisdom and general wisdom, with biblical wisdom beginning with the fear of the Lord.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

How have you typically approached reading the Bible? In what ways are you challenged to change your perspective as you come to the Word of God?

2

When you read the Bible, how often do you take in the literary style to understand its intention and meaning? How often do you assign authority to these scriptures to challenge and convict you in the way you live?

3

What genres of the Bible do you struggle with when reading? Share some tools and encourage one another on how we can understand the Bible better.

4

When was the last time we felt like the Bible spoke deeply into our lives or confronted an area of our life?

5

How can we slow down to read the Bible intentionally, purposefully and patiently?

6

When was the last time we engaged with the Bible in the same way we engage with our hobbies, setting aside time to really study and understand it?



BIG IDEA

We come to the Bible as students with humility, ultimately with the goal of transformation. We read it as both scripture and literature, as sacred and authoritative for us and as something to be interpreted and understood. As we meditate on the word of God, and study the word of God, we believe that it is the living word of God that transforms us from glory to glory.